

Minutes

June 28, 2021

N. C. Board of Agriculture

Ray Allen

Ben Shelton

Doug Boyd

Bob Sutter

Jose Calderon

Jeffrey Turner

John William Carter, III

Scott Tyson

Anne Faircloth

Faylene Whitaker

Jim Lambeth

Steve Troxler, Chairman

Table of Contents

- I. Call to Order and Reading of Ethics Reminder – Commissioner Troxler**
- II. Approve Minutes from the March 17, 2021 Meeting**
- III. Approval of State Fair Admission Prices**
- IV. Referendum Request**
Tobacco Research Commission
- V. Rule-making, Initiate Rule-making Process**
Veterinary division *02 NCAC 52B .0214 Importation Requirements: Rabbits*
- VI. Rule-making, Final Adoption**
NC Forest Service *02 NCAC 60B Section .1000 DuPont State Forest*

Amendments:
02 NCAC 60B .1001, .1002, .1003, .1004, .1005, .1006, .1007, .1008, .1009, .1010, .1011,
.1012, .1013 .1014, .1015, .1017, .1018, .1019, .1020, .1021, .1022, .1024, .1025, .1026,
.1027, .1028, .1029, .1030, .1031, .1032,

Adoptions:
02 NCAC 60B .1016 Firearms
02 NCAC 60B .1033 Parking
02 NCAC 60B .1034 Abandoned Property
02 NCAC 60B .1035 Minors
- VII. Department Updates**
- VIII. Other Business**

Minutes

June 28th, 2021

N.C. Board of Agriculture

The June 28th, 2021 N.C. Board of Agriculture meeting was held in-person at the Steve Troxler Agricultural Sciences Center at 4400 Reedy Creek Road, Raleigh NC. The Commissioner called the meeting to order at 1:43pm and read the ethics reminder before calling on Tina Hlabse, NCDA&CS General Counsel, to begin the roll call.

Tina Hlabse called the roll and established that there was a quorum. The following Board members were present: Commissioner Steve Troxler, Jose Calderon, Billy Carter, Jim Lambeth, Bob Sutter, Scott Tyson and Faylene Whitaker.

Other participants present included: Zane Hedgecock, Joe Reardon, Scott Bissette, David Smith, Chrissy Waggett, Tina Hlabse, Jon Lanier, Chris McLennan, Anna Hayworth, Laura Kilian, Beth Farrell, Tien Cheng, Kaleb Rathbone, Weston McCorkle, Dr. Doug Meckes, Dr. Michael Martin, Ashley Collins, Jeff Burns and Kelly Powell-McIver.

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Commissioner Troxler made several announcements to open the meeting, including that Assistant Commissioner Joe Reardon would be retiring effective June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021; North Carolina State Veterinarian Dr. Doug Meckes would be retiring effective July 31<sup>st</sup>, and Christina Waggett and Dr. Michael Martin had been selected as their successors, respectively. The Commissioner also recognized board member Bob Sutter, who will be retiring from his current role as CEO of the North Carolina Peanut Growers Association and introduced Ashley Collins, the new CEO. Commissioner Troxler also presented Mr. Sutter with the NCDA&CS Ambassador of Agriculture award for his contributions to the Board, North Carolina agriculture and the peanut industry.

Commissioner Troxler then called for the approval of the minutes from the March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Board meeting. Billy Carter made the MOTION to approve the March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021 meeting minutes as provided. The motion was seconded by Bob Sutter, and there was no subsequent questions or discussion. All board members voted “yea,” and the motion passed unanimously.

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Kent Yelverton, NC State Fair manager, was called on to present for approval proposed changes to the North Carolina State Fair admission prices. Given the challenges the NC State Fair faces from the cancellation of the 2020 NC State Fair due to COVID-19, approval was requested for an admission fee of \$5 for senior citizens, with the exception of Senior Citizens Day.

There was discussion among the Board members regarding the potential impacts on revenue as a result of this change. , This change will assist in offsetting lost revenue from last year, which totaled \$9 million, and included furloughing 54 employees.

Bob Sutter made the MOTION to approve the proposed State Fair admission prices, and the motion was seconded by Faylene Whitaker. The motion passed unanimously.

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The next item on the agenda was a referendum request for the Tobacco Research Commission. The Commissioner called on Elizabeth Farrell to present the proposal to the Board. Ms. Farrell outlined that the Tobacco Research Commission was requesting authorization to conduct a fall 2021 referendum to cover the 2022 – 2027 crop years. Scott Tyson made a MOTION to approve the referendum request. The motion was seconded by Billy Carter. The motion passed unanimously.

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The next item on the agenda was to initiate the rulemaking process for the Veterinary division regarding importation requirements for rabbits, 02 NCAC 52B .0213 Importation Requirements: Rabbits. The Commissioner called on Tien Cheng to present the proposed rule. Mr. Cheng outlined the proposed rule and the potential health impact to the animal population – both domesticated and feral – due to the spread of rabbit hemorrhagic disease virus, RHDV-2, introduced in the United States in 2018.

Billy Carter made the MOTION to initiate the rulemaking process for 02 NCAC 52B .0213 Importation Requirements: Rabbits, and Jim Lambeth seconded the motion. The Board had some discussion related to the fatality rate of animals affected with this disease. Mr. Cheng confirmed that the disease is 100% fatal to infected rabbits. The motion passed unanimously.

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The next item on the agenda was the final adoption of numerous rules in 02 NCAC 60B, Section 1000, DuPont State Forest. This included amendments to sections: 02 NCAC 60B .1001, .1002, .1003, .1004, .1005, .1006, .1007, .1008, .1009, .1010, .1011, .1012, .1013, .1014, .1015, .1017, .1018, .1019, .1020, .1021, .1022, .1024, .1025, .1026, .1027, .1028, .1028, .1030, .1031, .1032; and adoptions to: 02 NCAC 60B .1016 Firearms, 02 NCAC 60B .1033 Parking, 02 NCAC 60B .1034 Abandoned Property, and 02 NCAC 60B .1035 Minors.

The Commissioner called on Tien Cheng to present these rules to the Board. Mr. Cheng recounted that the Board had initiated the rulemaking process for these rules back in March. He further explained that these rules had been posted for public comment and had not received any comments to date. There was a brief discussion among the Board regarding application to all State Forests, not just DuPont, which Mr. Cheng confirmed.

Billy Carter made a MOTION for final adoption of the rules as presented. The motion was seconded by Jose Calderon. There was no further discussion or questions. The motion passed unanimously.

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Commissioner Troxler next called on NCDA&CS staff to give updates and then asked the Board members to give brief updates on the current conditions in their respective areas.

Laura Kilian, Legislative Liaison, updated the Board on the State budget's progress in both the House and the Senate, as well as COVID-19 related funds. She also mentioned that the 2021 Farm Bill had been drafted and will be going before the Senate soon.

Assistant Commissioner Joe Reardon provided an update on the new Steve Troxler Agricultural Sciences Center, which is nearing final completion and will be ready for move-in this year. He added that the Department is seeking additional funding to assist in the surveillance of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). He also shared that the Food and Drug Protection Division has received funding to begin conducting produce testing across North Carolina.

Deputy Commissioner David Smith reported that the Department continues to face challenges with turnover and vacancies.

Kelly Powell-McIver presented on behalf of Assistant Commissioner Sandy Stewart on the status of the IMPEC program, which has provided funding opportunities and assistance for meat processing companies impacted by COVID-19. The program has assisted nearly 100 companies throughout the State in increasing efficiency and capacity to boost the supply chain.

Kent Yelverton, NC State Fair Manager, gave a brief update on changes at the North Carolina State Fairgrounds, including the sale of 40 acres at the corner of Reedy Creek Road and Edwards Mill Road, and the construction of a new parking lot.

Christina Waggett was introduced as the new Assistant Commissioner for Consumer Protection, effective July 1st, 2021, and provided an update on the USDA Block Grant Program. Applications will begin in July and run through October. The program was funded at \$79.6 million and was created to provide assistance from Hurricane's Florence, Dorian, and Matthew.

Assistant Commissioner Scott Bissette spoke about the significant fire activity observed in late July. He also shared that there will be an additional building completed for the 2021 State Fair to showcase different forestry species for educational purposes.

Each Board member reported on the current weather and crop conditions in their area of the State.

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There being no further discussion or Board business, Bob Sutter made a MOTION to adjourn the meeting. The motion, seconded by Billy Carter, passed with each Board member voting "yea." The meeting of the N.C. Board of Agriculture adjourned at 3:19pm.

Recorded and Prepared by:

Anna R. Hayworth

Adopted by the Board this 8<sup>th</sup> day  
of November 2021.



Steven W. Troxler  
Commissioner of Agriculture  
Chairman



Tina L. Hlabse  
Secretary